



*PERMANENT MISSION OF THE KINGDOM
OF LESOTHO TO THE UNITED NATIONS
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STATEMENT

BY

**THE HONOURABLE MR. MOHLABI KENNETH TSEKOA
MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND INTERNATIONAL
RELATIONS OF THE KINGDOM OF LESOTHO**

AT THE

**SECOND UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON
LANDLOCKED DEVELOPING COUNTRIES**

**3 NOVEMBER 2014
VIENNA, AUSTRIA**

Please check against delivery

**Your Excellency Mr. Sebastian Kurz, President of the Second United Nations Conference on Landlocked Developing Countries,
Your Excellency Mr. Heinz Fischer, President of Austria,
Your Excellencies Heads of State and Government,
Your Excellency Mr. Ban Ki-moon, Secretary-General of the United Nations,
Your Excellency Mr. Sam Kutesa, President of the United Nations General Assembly,
Your Excellency Yamfwa Mukanga, Minister of Transport, Works, Supply and Communications of the Republic of Zambia and Chair of the Group of LLDCs,
Mr. Gyan Chandra Acharya, Secretary-General of the Conference,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen.**

Mr. President,

The Lesotho delegation wishes to congratulate you on your well-deserved election as President of the Second United Nations Conference on Landlocked Developing Countries. Your distinguished career as a diplomat and leader assures us of a successful Conference. I assure you of my delegation's unwavering cooperation and support.

I would also like to express our appreciation to the Government of Austria as Host, the Co-Chairs of the Preparatory Committee and to the UN Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Countries (UN-OHRLLS), for the excellent preparatory work for this Conference.

Mr. President,

Lesotho, a neighbour of the Republic of Zambia, is appreciative and humbled by the Tribute paid by this Conference to our departed Leader, President Michael Chilufya Sata. We too, feel the sense of loss of his departing.

Mr. President,

The Almaty Programme of Action (APoA) adopted in 2003 formed the first global partnership framework to address the special needs and challenges facing Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs) in achieving their development goals. The APoA aimed at integrating LLDCs into the global economy as they have special situations, needs, challenges and vulnerabilities. During the past decade, there has been some progress with certain improvements in transit cooperation, transport infrastructure development, trade performance, economic growth and social development. In recent years we have also witnessed stakeholders engaged in important policy reforms to remove the non-tariff barriers that hinder their participation in international trade.

However, much still needs to be done, as LLDCs continue to face development challenges that require concerted efforts at the international level due to their geographical locations. These problems translate into structural inadequacies and thereby undermine economic growth and development. The ever-increasing transport costs and transport infrastructure are some of the challenges that potentially retard the LLDCs' development prospects. This Second United Nations Conference on LLDCs provides a timely opportunity for LLDCs, transit developing countries and development partners to assess progress made, challenges still faced, and to formulate a new action-oriented programme that will address the constraints to promote economic growth and development of LLDCs.

Mr. President,

The LLDCs continue to face a myriad of challenges that are inherently linked to their geographical situation. Our isolation from the world markets, poor infrastructure, border crossing and logistic delays significantly impose a burden on our economies. This continued marginalization of LLDCs from international trading system prevents full benefit from trade as an engine of growth. In this connection, we must emphasize that international trade and trade facilitation are crucial to the development of LLDCs.

Moreover, it is worth noting that infrastructure development and maintenance remain problems facing both LLDCs and transit countries. In this context, we call for support for the establishment and maintenance of transit networks on the basis of mutual interest of both landlocked and transit countries. There is

need for strong integration of transport infrastructure of landlocked countries, with transit transport infrastructure of their transit developing countries. Furthermore, integrated information and communication networks are central to facilitating movement of goods from LLDCs.

In our view, the LLDCs need an enabling international environment for effective participation in international trade. Trade and transit issues are inextricably linked, hence, the need for the enhancement of trade facilitation, increased international assistance for export diversification, enhanced market access and efficient customs control. Lesotho acknowledges the important role played by sub-regional and regional cooperation of LLDCs and their transit neighbours in addressing cross border trade and transit problems. However, we call for support in institutional capacity-building in LLDCs and in transit developing countries for the promotion of simplification, harmonization and standardization of customs, administrative procedures and documentation.

Mr. President,

Notwithstanding existing regional integration schemes, Lesotho still remains one of the most disadvantaged of the thirty-two LLDCs, due to her unique geographical situation of being completely surrounded by one Country. This puts a lot of economic dependency on her single neighbour. Lesotho is therefore, no stranger to the adverse effects of landlockness. The burden of transport costs, cumbersome and slow export processing procedures contribute to the slow trade development in Lesotho. In this regard, increased international assistance for export diversification, infrastructure development, institutional capacity building and better market access, are essential for true integration into the global trading system.

Despite these challenges, my Country has made some strides towards the implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action (APoA). The APoA priorities have been integrated into our national development frameworks, in particular the National Strategic Development Plan (NSDP) designed to implement Lesotho's medium to long-term development goals. Through the NSDP, the Government of Lesotho has recognized the urgency to radically transform the economy in order to reduce poverty and achieve sustainable development. To achieve this, the NSPD has strategic priority areas aimed at, amongst others, developing key infrastructure in rural and urban transportation systems; improving access to main towns and key border posts;

improving transport safety and climate proof infrastructure. Some of these priority areas can only be achieved through strengthening cooperation with our neighbouring transit Country. LLDCs not only face the challenge of distance from sea ports, but also the challenges that result from dependence on passage through a sovereign transit country. In this regard, we underscore the importance of establishing and effectively implementing bilateral agreements between LLDCs and transit neighbouring countries in the spirit of lasting partnership.

Mr. President,

The United Nations Conference on LLDCs is a once-in-a-decade opportunity to reinvigorate global partnership in support of the LLDCs. It is imperative that the outcome of this Conference should aim at facilitating rapid, inclusive, transformative and sustained growth and accelerated poverty eradication for LLDCs. We cannot over-emphasize the fact that implementation of set programmes is always a challenge where there are no financial resources. There can be no impactful development without financing. Lest we forget, there cannot be any lasting peace without development and conversely, there can never be sustainable development without peace. Nurturing a culture of democracy, the rule of law and tolerance will remain the centre-piece for sustainable development.

In this regard, Official Development Assistance (ODA) is very critical in development, particularly in countries like Lesotho, which do not have sufficient domestic resources to meet their development needs. Yet we note with disappointment that overall, aid is declining. As we move towards the Post- 2015 Development Agenda, ODA should be part of a strong base for a renewed and strengthened global partnership.

In the same vein, I wish to underscore the fact that Financing for Development is also a fundamental process to the restoration of growth and leverage for fragile economies such as those of the LLDCs. We need to join forces and work collectively to advance the promotion of prosperity, equitable sharing of the world's common wealth and a sustainable future for our citizens.

Mr. President,

The importance of this Conference cannot be overemphasized. It is a source of hope and fresh opportunity that it is being held at a time when the international community is engaged in a process to elaborate a Post-2015 Development Agenda. The overarching theme of the Conference *“Partnerships for harnessing the full development potentials of Landlocked Developing Countries”* could not have been more relevant than at this current international juncture. We must take full advantage of this coincidence to ensure that the LLDC priorities are adequately addressed both in the new Programme of Action we are to adopt and also in the Post-2015 Development Agenda. As repeatedly echoed in various international fora, the Post-2015 Development Agenda should not leave any one behind.

We are hopeful that the Conference will further reinforce efforts of integrating LLDC economies into the global trading system, through trade facilitation, increased market access and development of productive capacities. The need for a more holistic approach to the development needs of LLDCs is dire, as it will address a full range of developmental challenges we are currently facing as LLDCs. Furthermore, it would be remiss of us not to highlight the need to integrate the LLDC agenda in the existing global trade discussions and WTO processes. Trade facilitation and trade integration are important in addressing LLDCs’ specific challenges.

Mr. President,

The journey, which began with the preparation of national reports on the implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action by the LLDCs, has been a long, but fruitful one. The successful holding of the regional review meetings, the thematic pre-conference events and most recently the meetings of the Preparatory Committee, bear testimony to the concerted efforts, contribution and strong commitment by all stakeholders to tackle the plight of LLDCs.

In conclusion, **Mr. President**, it is our sincere hope and plea that the international community will jointly make substantive contribution to bring about the much-needed change in the lives of people in Landlocked Developing Countries. The new Programme of Action for the coming decade should be much more comprehensive, forward-looking and action-oriented,

while ensuring sustainability and building resilience for LLDCs on a lasting basis.

I thank you.